

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Midnite Mine Superfund Site, Wellpinit, Washington

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

October 2004

The U.S. EPA invites you to a public informational meeting about the Midnite Mine Superfund Site

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

4:00 — 6:00 p.m.

Alfred E. McCoy Admin. Building—Council Chambers

6195 Ford-Wellpinit Road

Wellpinit, Washington

We will bring you up to date on a number of environmental topics of importance to the Spokane Tribe, including <> the cleanup study at Midnite Mine, <> the ongoing roadside ore cleanup work, <> progress on cleanup at the Dawn mill in Ford, <> the Tribe's own environmental monitoring, <> the status of the Upper Columbia River study, and <> the Coeur d'Alene Basin cleanup. Refreshments will be served.

We look forward to answering your questions at the meeting! We'll be talking about:

Progress on the Haul Road Ore Removal

Starting in September, you may have noticed traffic flaggers, backhoes, and trucks at work along the Ford-Wellpinit road. Dawn Mining Company has been removing uranium ore that, over the years, spilled from trucks traveling between Midnite Mine and Ford, where the ore was milled. EPA and the Spokane Tribe are overseeing the work.

Although rain caused delays in September, we expect to finish the work in mid-October. So far, the spill sites on the road west of Wellpinit have been completed, and Dawn is now working on those between Wellpinit and Ford. The removed ore and soil is being trucked back to Midnite Mine, where it came from. Workers are filling the holes with clean material. The ore and soil removed from the roadside will be managed with the other waste rock and ore at Midnite Mine, as part of the overall cleanup.



Workers dig up spilled uranium ore next to Ford-Wellpinit Road.

Midnite Mine Cleanup Study

You may remember that in 1999 EPA began an environmental study of Midnite Mine. We studied where mining has affected the water and soil, and estimated the risks to people and the environment. During the study, we mailed fact sheets and held meetings with you to share what we have learned about the problems at the site.

At the upcoming meeting, we'll tell you the latest on when we hope to finish the study and when we'll propose a cleanup plan for your review and comments. Although EPA has shared many draft reports, the most important report is the Remedial Investigation (RI) report and Feasibility Study (FS). The RI report will describe the effects of mining at Midnite Mine – both in the area where mining took place and in areas downstream and downwind of the mine. The FS will describe and evaluate ways to clean up the soil, water, and sediments. We want you to understand these reports so you give us your input on the cleanup options for the site.

What About Other Sites in the Area?

At the meeting, EPA will also report on other sites of interest to the Spokane Tribal community: the Upper Columbia River and the Coeur d'Alene Basin. We'll have the most recent fact sheets and other documents for these sites available at the meeting. In addition, the Washington Department of Health will update you on the Dawn Mining Company cleanup at the mill in Ford.

When Can I See the Midnite Mine Report?

In late October, key Midnite Mine plans and reports will be available for you to review at the **Spokane Tribal College and Community Library on 6232 Old School Road in Wellpinit**. EPA also plans to put plans and reports on a CD-ROM disk so people can use the computer at the library to view the documents, search for topics of interest, and print those pages. Many of these are already available on the Internet (*see website address below*).

For more information, please call **Diana Jones, Librarian, at (509) 258-9202**. The Spokane Tribe's Department of Natural Resources will also continue to maintain a file of Midnite Mine site plans, reports, and correspondence.

State of the Reservation: Status Report from the Tribe's Natural Resources Department

The Spokane Tribe Natural Resources office is monitoring environmental conditions on the reservation. Ravena Adolph, manager of the air quality program at the Tribe's Department of Natural Resources, will present information about air quality on the Spokane Reservation. Other departmental staff will give presentations as well. These topics will be announced at the public meeting.

Site Description and Background

Midnite Mine is an inactive open-pit uranium mine eight miles northwest of Wellpinit, Washington, on the Spokane Reservation. Between 1955 and 1981, Dawn Mining Company mined uranium ore at Midnite Mine. Waste rock and piles of ore and protore (lower grade ore) remain on the site. Two pits remain open and contain water; the larger, more contaminated pit is fenced to prevent access. Since 1992, Dawn has been required to collect contaminated water flowing from the mined areas.

Site Background *continued*

The water is treated on-site to remove contamination and is discharged to a surface drainage that leads to Blue Creek. Trucks move sludge from the water treatment area to Dawn's mill and dispose of it in the lined tailings disposal pond at the mill. This has helped reduce the amount of contaminated water leaving the site, but a more effective and permanent control is needed to protect people's health and the environment.

In May 2000, because of elevated levels of metals and radionuclides at the site, EPA listed Midnite Mine on the Superfund National Priorities List of sites eligible for federal cleanup funds. The EPA cleanup study is now wrapping up. This study is called the "Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study" or "RI/FS."

CONTACT INFORMATION**EPA**

Reach us during business hours through our toll-free number: **1-800-424-4372**.

For questions about the roadside ore removal, or technical questions about the Midnite Mine Site, please call:

Ellen Hale, Project Manager

(206) 553-1215

E-mail: hale.ellie@epa.gov

For more information on how to become involved, please call:

Debra Sherbina, Community Involvement Coordinator

(206) 553-0247

E-mail: sherbina.debra@epa.gov

Spokane Tribe

Randy Connolly coordinates EPA-Tribal communications on Midnite Mine and two other Superfund projects of interest to the Spokane Tribe. **Randy maintains a file of project documents accessible to the public at the Tribal Natural Resources Department.**

Contact **Randy** at **(509) 258-7709, ext. 13**. E-mail: connolly@spokanetribe.com.

Most of these documents are also available at the Wellpinit Tribal College Library.

Visit the *EPA Internet homepage*: <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth>. Go to the EPA webpage, click on "Index," then click on "M" and scroll down to find the "Midnite Mine" website.



Alternative formats are available upon request by calling Debra Sherbina at 1-800-424-5372, extension 0247. TTY users: please call 1-800-877-8339.



United States Environmental Protection Agency

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WELLPINT, WASHINGTON
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See details inside